discussions with the Unions. A committee has been constituted to evaluate the factors responsible for storage/transit losses and quality complaint procedures and to make recommendations as to whether any change/amendment is warranted.

Stock position of wheat and rice

*355. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the present stock position of wheat and rice with the Food Corporation of India;

(b) whether Government have procured more rice and wheat in 2000-2001; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR) : (a) The stock position of wheat and rice in the Central Pool is as under :—

(Fig. in lakh tonnes)

Wheat*	Rice*	Total*
357.97	265.03	623.00

*As on 1-11-2001

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The quantity of rice procured during 2000-2001 (Kharif Marketing Season) was 191.03 lakh tonnes as against 172.73 lakh tonnes during 1999-2000 (Kharif Marketing Season). Similarly, the quantity of wheat procured during 2000-2001 (Rabi Marketing Season) was 163.56 lakh tonnes as against 141.43 lakh tonnes during 1999-2000 (Rabi Marketing Season).

Clearance Commission on local cheques by Ghaziabad Postal Circle

*356. SHRI RAJU PARMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that post offices in Ghaziabad Circle charge clearance commission on the cheques of local nationalised banks presented to them against PPF deposits etc. on the plea that these cheques are sent to Delhi for clearance; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government to do away with charging of such commission?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) No clearance commission is charged in Ghaziabad Division, on the cheques of local banks.

In past, out-station charges were being levied on the cheques drawn on the local nationalized banks situated at Noida as their clearing house is in Delhi. Consequently, such cheques were being treated as out-station cheques.

Instruction have, however, now been issued to do away with charging of such commission.

STD/ISD/Internet/Fax Facilities in U.P.

*357. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the Gram Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh where STD/ISD/Internet/Fax facilities, etc., have been provided/are proposed to be provided during the year 2001-2002; and

(b) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) There are a total of 64093 Gram Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh out of which telecom facility has been provided in 51370 Gram Panchayats. STD/ISD facilities have been extended to 3473 Gram Panchayats. All block headquarters except 21 have STD/ISD facility. FAX facilities are available on all telephones. Infrastructure is available in all the district headquarters of the country including UP to provide Internet facility. Internet facility is also available in 763 Block Headquarters out of 901 in UP and Uttaranchal.

It is intended to cover all remaining Gram Panchayats by December, 2002. Various technologies including WLL systems in particular are being deployed to provide telecom facility to uncovered Gram Panchayats. These systems have capability of providing STD/ISD/FAX and Internet facilities.

Production of Synthetic Rutile

*358. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :